

THE BRECKENRIDGE NEWS.

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NO. 2

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BRANDENBURG, KY.



EDWIN BROTHERTOFT.
BY THEODORE WINTROP.

SYNOPSIS.

PART I.—Edwin Brothertoft, heir to a manor on the Hudson, is left an orphan with the manor heavily mortgaged to the Millwrights. He goes to New York city to seek his fortune. CHAPTER IV.—John Bilbo, the Bilbo heiress, gains an interview with young Brothertoft. V.—The Bilbo and Brothertoft fortunes are united by marriage. VI.—Brothertoft goes on a colonial mission to England. Mrs. Brothertoft succumbs to angina and dies. VII.—Birth of a daughter, Lucy, and return home. VIII.—The manor house becomes the resort of redcoats. Brothertoft is at last visited by wife and daughter. He joins the patriots. PART II.—Major Peter Skerrett, aid to General Washington, arrives at General Putnam's camp at Fishkill-on-the-Hudson. CHAPTER III.—Skerrett volunteers to lead a party to "cut out" Captain Kerr, a redcoat, who is a guest at Brothertoft manor. V.—Edwin Brothertoft, known as Sergeant Lincoln, is among Skerrett's men. A servant from the manor, Voltaire, brings news to camp. VI.—Mrs. Brothertoft designs that Lucy shall marry Captain Kerr. VII.—Lucy is anxious to escape. VIII.—Skerrett takes Voltaire into the plot to capture Kerr and rescue Lucy. VIII.—Jerrick Dewitt, an old manor hand, is Skerrett's guide.

PART TWO—CHAPTER VII.



"Now, listen, Voltaire."

"After this history, I want a little to-
pography," said Skerrett. "Can you
sketch me a ground plan of the house?"

That skeleton Brothertoft could draw
without much feeling. The house, as it
stood, complete in the background of
memory, he would not allow himself to
recall. Its walls and furniture were to
him the unshifted scenes and properties
of a tragedy. If he painted them before
his mind's eye an evil omened figure of
a woman would step from behind the
curtain, threatening some final horror
to close the drama of their lives.

"This wing to the right," Skerrett
said, "seems an addition."

"It was built by the present propri-
etress," coddly rejoined the former heir.
"Stables here!" continued the major,
tracing the plan. "Dining room win-
dows open toward them. Shrubbery
here, not too far off for an ambush."

Now, Voltaire, if we could get Major
Kerr alone in that dining room in the
dusk of the evening tomorrow I could
walk him off easily."

"Ho!" exclaimed the butler. "That's
all settled beforehand."

"Kerr sometimes makes late sittings
there, then? I fancied I knew his hab-
its."

"He's a poor hand at courtin," says
Voltaire, with contempt. "Ladies like
devotion—that's my experience. He's
only devoted to fillin himself full of
wine."

"A two bottle man?"

"Every day, when the ladies leave ta-
ble, he rubs his hands"—Voltaire imi-
tates—"and says, 'Now then, old boy,
fresh bottle! Yellow Seal! Don't shake
him! He drinks that pretty slow and
gives me a glass and says, 'Woolly head,
will drink my pretty Lucy. Lucky
Kerr, pretty head!'"

Peter Skerrett here looked foreboding.

"Then," continued the old fellow, "he
drops off asleep at the table till four
o'clock. Then he wakes up, sour, and
sings out—"Voltaire imitates—"Hullo,
you dam nigger! Look sharp! Another
bottle! If you shake him I'll cut your
black heart out! He drinks him, and
then bemoans he says, 'Ole fell! Smore
wine, ole fell. Father bottle down! I
shakin' some lawd, ole fell! Then he
sings a little and gets generally accel-
erated."

"I would rather have him slowed than
accelerated," says Peter.

"Oho!" grinned the butler and whis-
pered to himself, "If the major thinks
he ought to be stupid tipsy for the good
of the cause and Miss Lucy, I can dete-
riorate him into his Madeira with a little
drop of our French Cordon de Roy brandy.
That will take the starch out of his
legs and make him easy to handle. But
that is my business. I won't tell nobody
my secrets. The pantry and I must
keep dark."

"I cannot help a grain of compunction
in this matter," Skerrett said. "A gen-
tleman does not like to interfere in an-
other man's courtship."

"Do you call this plot of a coarse man
with an unnoberly woman by the fair
name of courtship?" Brothertoft said.

"No. And fortunately the lady has
no illusions. I should not like to be the
one to tell Beauty she had loved Beast.
But this Beauty, it seems, has kept her
heart too pure to have lost her fine
magnificently instinct of aversion to a black
guard. Well, no more metaphysical
scruples be hanged! Kerr don't deserve
to be treated like a gentleman. Eng-
land should have kept such fellows at
home, if she wanted us to believe good
manners were possible under a mon-
archy. Now, then, Mr. Brothertoft, sup-
pose I do not get myself 'hanged as an
esp' and take my prisoner, does his
capture protect your daughter enough?"

"I can't see it, if it were possible, to
have her live in homeforth."

"We must make it possible, though it
complicates matters. I could rush in,
snatch Kerr and be off. The blow
would be struck, the enemy annoyed,
our people amused; but in a fortnight
Clinton would offer some Yankee major
and a brace of captains to boot for his
adjutant, the honorable, etc. Then he
would go down and play Beas to Beauty
again."

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again."

Which he opened his mouth to do.
"What people besides the two ladies
and Major Kerr will be at your house
tomorrow evening—the servants I
mean?"

"Oh! we live small at the manor now—
ridiculously small. It's war times now.
Rents isn't paid. When we want a
proper lot of servants we takes cloth-
pess."

"Lucky for my plans you do live
small," Skerrett said. "Never mind
your family pride. Name the house-
hold."

"Me and Sappho and Plato, all patri-
ots; Jerrick Dewitt's wife and her sis-
ter, Sally Bilbo, both Tories—that is,
gals that likes redcoats more than is
good for 'em."

"Could you manage to have the girls
out of the way tomorrow evening?"

"Easy enough. They'll be glad to
get away for a frolic."

"Any horses in your stable, Voltaire?"

"Six—all out of that Harriet Heriot
mare stock. You remember, Master
Edwin."

Edwin Brothertoft did sadly remem-
ber the late old Sam Galsworthy's gen-
erous offer. He remembered sadly that
ride, so many years ago, and how the
sweet winds, laden with the rustle
of tropic palms, met him with fair
omen—ah! long ago, when faith was
blind and hope was young.

"Six white horses," Voltaire contin-
ued; "the four carriage horses, madam's
horse and Miss Lucy's mare—you ought
to see Miss Lucy on her."

Perhaps I shall. Tell Plato to give
the mare another out tomorrow! Her
mistress may want a canter in the even-
ing—eh, Voltaire?"

Grin in response.

"Tell Miss Brothertoft, with her fa-
ther's best love," Skerrett resumed, "that
he will be on the lawn by the dining
room window tomorrow evening at nine
o'clock, waiting for her to ride with him
to Fishkill. Tell her to be brave, pru-
dent, and keep out of sight with a head-
scarf until she is called to start. And
you, Voltaire, as you love her, be cau-
tious, be secret and be wide awake!"

"At 'be cautious' the old fellow winked
elaborately. At 'be secret' he
looked all four eyelids tight. At 'be
wide awake'—snaps! eyelids flung open,
and white of eye enough appeared to
dazzle a sharpshooter."

"Now, listen, Voltaire!"

Mouth agape again, as if he had a
tympannum at each tonsil.

"Look at me carefully!" continues
Peter.

Pan shut and eyes a la sancor.

"Do you think you would know me
disguised in a red coat?"

Pan opened to explode, "Certain sure,
sir!"

"And without my mustache?" the ma-
jor asked.

He gave that feature a tender twirl.
His fingers wrapped the fair tendril
lovingly around them.

"Must it go?" he sighed. "O chival-
ry! O liberty! O my country! what
sacrifices you demand!"

Voltaire was sure that he would know
the hero even with an emasculated lip.

"Well, about eight tomorrow evening,
when Major Kerr is 'accelerated' with
his second bottle, I shall knock at your
loyal door—mustache off and red coat
on—and ask a night's lodging for a be-
nighted British sergeant."

"You shall have it," says the major
domo, with a grand seigneur manner.

"Nothing but applejack or Jersey
champagne has passed these lips since
we lost the Brandywine. You will natu-
rally give me my bottle of Yellow Seal
and my bite of supper in the dining
room with the major."

"Oh!" cried Voltaire, with sudden
panic. "Don't risk it! Major Kerr's
got a sword awful long and awful sharp,
and two pistols, with gold handles, plum
fall of bullets. Every day when he
drinks he puts 'em on the sideboard, an
he says: 'Lookerheyar, ole darky. 'Spore
dam rebelle cum. I stick him so, an I
shoot him so. Don't risk it, Mas'r
Skerrett!"

(Ancient servitor, suppress thy terror
and thy Tremblings together!)

"Slip off with the weapon and hide
'em in your bed," says the major.

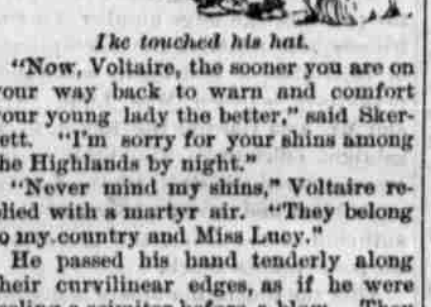
"In my bed?" says Voltaire, in good
Continental again. "In our feather
bed? Suppose Sappho goes to lie down
and touches cold iron, won't she take on
scallops, high?"

"The poetess must not be taught to
strike a jangling lyre. Give the tools to
Plato. Set him on guard at the dining
room door when I come. Tell him he is
serving a model republic—such as his
ancient namesake never dreamed—"

Brothertoft smiled at these classical
allusions. Lively talk was encouraging
him as his junior meant it should.

"Neither toresaw what a ghastly mis-
chief was to follow this arming of Plato."

PART TWO—CHAPTER VIII.



"He touched his hat."

"Now, Voltaire, the sooner you are on
your way back to warn and comfort
your young lady the better," said Sker-
rett.

"I'm sorry for your shins among
the Highlands by night."

"Never mind my shins," Voltaire re-
plied with a martyr air. "They belong
to my country and Miss Lucy."

ting there will be tragedy," Peter con-
tinued.

So all three knew, and shuddered to
think. "I will walk a little way with
my friend," said Brothertoft; "I have a
more hopeful message now to send to
my dear child."

Peter watched the two contrasted fig-
ures until they disappeared in the glow
of the many colored forest.

"Lovely old gentleman!" he thought.
"Yes, lovely is the word. My first en-
counter with a broken heart. It has
stopped my glee for a long time to come.
I have felt tears in my eyes all the
while, and only kept them down by talk-
ing low comedy with the serio comic
black personage. Can a broken heart be
mended? That is always woman's
work, I suppose. In this case, too, woman
broke, woman must repair. The
daughter must make over what the
wife spoiled. She shall be saved for
his sake and her own, even if I
come out of the business an amputat-
ed torso. I don't quite comprehend
people that cannot help themselves. But
here I see the fact—there are such. And
I suppose exuberant chaps, like myself,
are put in the world to help them. I
wonder whether any woman will break
my heart! I wonder whether Miss Lucy
liked any of our fellows, and had a hero
in her eye to make Kerr look more cal-
tiff than he is. Could not be Scram-
mel—he is a sneak. Could not be Ran-
diere—he is too despicable. Nor Hum-
phreys—too pompous. Nor Livingston—
he is not sentimental enough. Nor
Skerrett—him she has never seen and
will see with his mustache off. Ah! the
chief was right when he told me I should
put my foot into some adventure up here.
And now the thing is started I must set
it moving."

He walked toward Jerrick Dewitt, still
on guard at the gate. His relief was
just coming up and the sentry was at
liberty.

"Did you know those two men I was
talking with by the well, Jerrick?" Peter
asked.

"Yes, sir; Sergeant Lincoln and Lady
Brothertoft's factotum. I'd like to
know what old Voltaire wanted here."

"He does not recognize the ex-Pa-
tron," Skerrett thought. "Then no
one will."

Jerrick's eyes always saw a
lighter in the dark and a little
steadier in a glare than the next man's.
Sorrow must have clapped a thick mask
on my friend's face."

"I suppose you know the Brothertoft
manor country and the manor house
thoroughly, Jerrick," the major said.

"Know the manor, sir! I should
think so. I began with chasing tumble-
bugs and crickets over it, and studied it
inch by inch. Then I trailed black
snakes and ran rabbits, and got to know
it red by red. I've fished in every
brook and dived every nut tree and
poked into every woodcock swamp or
partridge brush from end to end of it. I
know it, woodland and clearing, side
hill and swale, fields that grow stun and
fields that grow corn. I've run horses
over it, where horses is to run—and
that's not much for its awful humpy
country, and boulders won't stay put
anywhere. Deer, too—there are many
pieces of woods on it where I haven't
counted on deer, and when they legged
for the Highlands I legged too, and
came to know the Highlands just as
well. I used to love, when I was a boy,
to go along on the heights above the
river, and pick out places where I was
going to live; but I shan't live in any of
'em now. What does a man care about
home, or living at all, when his woman
is true?"

Major Skerrett did not interrupt this
burst of reminiscences. "Jerrick suffers
as much in his way," he thought, "as
the ex-Patron." "And the house," he
said, "you know that as thoroughly?"

"Ay, from garret to cellar. My fa-
ther, Squire Dewitt, has been in Eng-
land, and he says it's more like an Eng-
lish house than any he knows, in small.
From garret to cellar, says I. The cel-
lar I ought to know pretty well. I
dugged in there once when I was a boy
hanging round the house, and got into
the winerom and drank stuff that
came near spoiling my taste for rum for-
ever. I wish it had. They caught me
and the madam had me whipped till the
blood came. Mr. Brothertoft tried to
beg off for me. She'd got not to make
much of him by that time, and the more
he begged the harder she had 'em lay it
on me. But I'm talkin off, stidly as the

North river, and you've got something
to say to me, major, I know by the way
you look. What's up about Brothertoft
manor?"

"There's a British officer staying
there who has never tasted pork and
beans. I've promised General Putnam
to bring him up here to dinner."

"Hoora! That's right. Give these
militia something to think about, or
they get to believe war's like general
trainin day, and they can cut for home
when they get tired. You want volun-
teers, I'm one."

"I counted on you for my lieutenant.
Sergeant Lincoln also goes. Now I
want three men more, and you shall
choose them. Each man must have the
grit of a hundred, and they must know
the country as well as they know the
way to breakfast. Name three, Jerrick!"

"That I'll do, bang. There's Ike Van
Wart for one. His juntu, him and Jack
Paulding and Dave Williams, would
just make the three. But Jack is
sailed down to York in a prison
ship. And Dave's off on furlough, sow-
ing his father's winter wheat for the
cowboys to tramp next summer."

Only Isaac Van Wart therefore, of
that famous trio, whom the muse of
tradition shall fondly nickname Major
Andre's bootblack, joined Skerrett on
his perilous service.

"He for one," continued Dewitt.
"Well, Galsworthy, old Sam Gal-
sworthy for two. And for three I don't
believe a better man lives than Hendre-
cus Canady, the root doctor's son. They're
all Brothertoft manor boys, built
with the best cast steel, and strung
with the wiriest kind of wire. Shoot
bullets into 'em, stick baggonets into
'em; they don't mind the bullets any
more than spitballs at school, nor
the baggonets more than witches do
pins."

"Well, Jerrick, have them here in an
hour. I will join you and talk the trip
over, and we will be ready to start at
sunset."

Skerrett found himself a horse, trotted



back to Fishkill, wrote a farewell to
his stepbrother and his mother and
scratched a few irrepressible lines to
Washington, such as the hero loved to
get from his boys and valued much
more than the lumbering dispatches
marked official. The dispatches only
announced facts, good or bad. The
brisk, gallant notes revealed spirits
which black facts could not darken nor
heavy facts depress. "So long as I have
lads like Peter Skerrett," thought our
George, by the grace of God Peter Pa-
trian, when he received this note, a fort-
night after that cup-lip-and-slip battle
of Germantown, "while I have such lads
with me, I can leave my red paint in my
saddle bags with my Tuscarora gram-
mar."

"Now," thought Peter, "I have made
my will and written my dispatch. I
must proceed to change myself into a
redcoat."

He unpacked a British sergeant's uni-
form, which he had carried, if disguise
should be needed in his late solitary
journey.

"There is a garment," said he, hold-
ing up the coat with an air of respect,
"whose pockets have felt the king's
shilling. But thy pockets, old buff and
buff"—he stripped off his own coat—
"never knew bullion, though often
stuffed with Continental paper at a pis-
taren the pound avoidupois."

His weather beaten scarlets were
much too small for the tall champion.
By spasms and pauses, and spasms again,
however, he managed to squeeze into
them at last.

Then he took Mrs. Birdsell's little
equilateral triangle of mirror, three
inches to a side, and holding it off at
arm's length surveyed himself by sections.

"The color don't suit my complexion,"
he said, viewing his head and neck.

"The coat will not button over my man-
ly chest, and I shall have to make it fast
with a lanyard"—here he took a view of
the rib region. "The tails are simply
ridiculous"—he twisted about to bring
the glass to bear upon them. "In short"—
and he ran the bit of mirror up and
down—"I am a scarecrow, cap-a-pie.
Liberty here! I would not know me.
Pretty costume to go and see a lady in!
Confound women! Why will wives
break husbands' hearts? Why will girls
grow up beauties and heroines and be-
come bairns for brutes? A! Miss Lucy
Brothertoft! You do not know what an
inglorious rig Peter Skerrett is submit-
ting to for your sake. And the worst is
to come. Alas, the worst must come!"

He hoisted the looking glass and gazed
for a moment irresolutely at his face.

There, in its accented place, sat the
mustache, blond in color, heroic in curl,
underscoring his firm nose, pointing and
adorning the handsome visage.

Skerrett gazed, sighed and was silent.

Nerve him, liberty! Steel him, chival-
ry!

A hard look crept over his counte-
nance.

He clutched a short blade, pointless,
but with an edge trenchant as wit.

It was a razor.

Behold him, trophy in hand and mis-
erable that he has won it!

Will resolution carry him through a
second assault? Or will he go to our aid,
under one nostril a golden wreath, un-
der the other bristles for a six month?

Slash! The assassination is complete.
"It will take gallons on gallons of
this October to put me in good spirits
again," says the major as he rode away.

The mellow air, all sweetness, all
sparkle and all perfume, flowed up to
his lips generously. He breathed and
breathed and breathed again, that free
tap, and by the time he reached the
rendezvous was buoyant as ever.

The orderly, Brothertoft, was await-
ing him and sat patient, but no longer
despondent, looking through bulky
Highlands as if they were the moun-
tains of a dream.

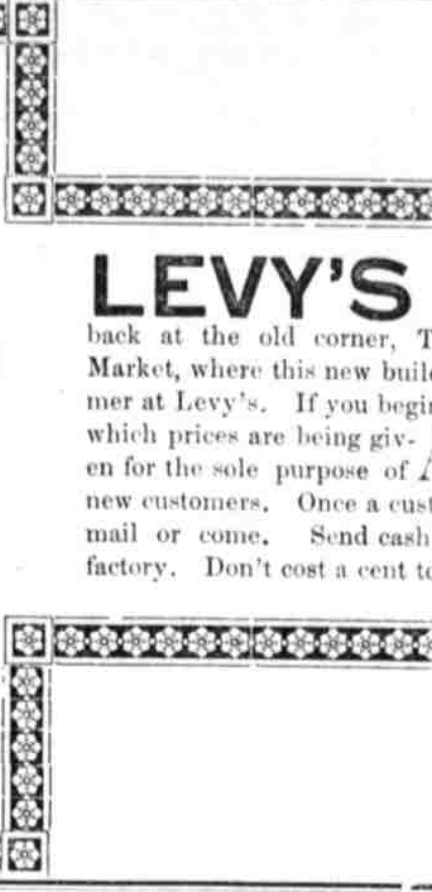
Jerrick Dewitt and his three were sky-
larking in a pumpkin patch. Twenty
years ago we saw the same three stand-
ing and spurring tombstones in the
Brothertoft manor graveyard, the day
of the last Patron's funeral—the day
when old Van Courtlandt made a Del-
phi Apollo of him, and foretold, amid
general clink of glasses, that marriage
of white promise and black perfor-
mance.

"The child is father of the man;" and
the four boys have grown up as their
fathers' children should.

Jerrick Dewitt had already shown him-
self, and related why he is not fully up
to his mark of manliness.

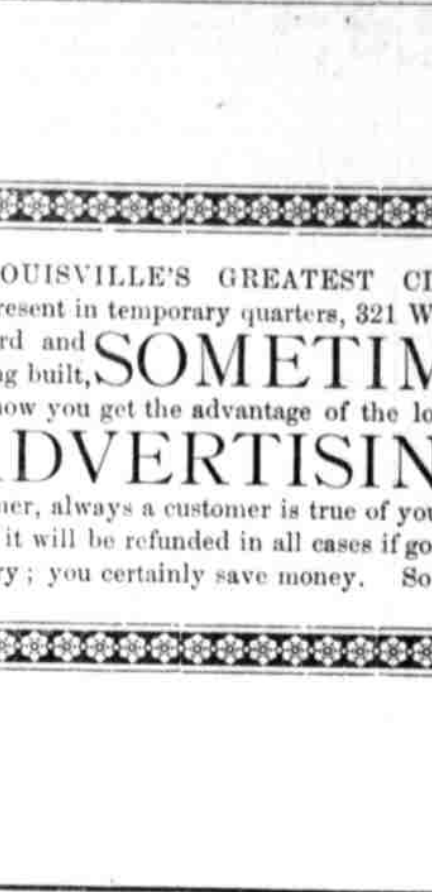
When he caught sight of Major Sker-
rett he dropped a yellow bomb, charged
with possible pumpkin pies, which he
was about to toss at the head of one of
his men, and marched the file up to be
reviewed by its leader.

"Number one is the same Van Wart, Major,"
says Jerrick. "His eyes are peeled, if
there's any eyes got their bark off in the
whole thirteen."



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